

# Academic Self-Efficacy and Mental Well-Being of Unprivileged Senior High School Students

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**Abstract** - This study sought to investigate the impact of academic self-efficacy on the mental well-being of underprivileged senior high school students, specifically 4Ps beneficiaries at Burdeos National High School in the Philippines. Based on Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory and Yoesoep Edhie Rachmad's Mental Well-being Theory, the research examined the correlation between students' confidence in their academic ability and their emotional, social, and functional well-being. The study utilized a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research approach to survey 288 senior high school pupils. Descriptive analysis indicated that students exhibited high academic self-efficacy ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ) and excellent mental well-being, notably in positive emotions and thinking, relationship and functioning. Correlational analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation between academic self-efficacy and mental well-being ( $r = 0.43$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). However, regression analysis indicated that academic self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.213$ ,  $p = 0.215$ ), sex ( $\beta = 0.021$ ,  $p = 0.833$ ), and age ( $\beta = 0.093$ ,  $p = 0.341$ ) were not statistically significant predictors of mental well-being. These data substantiate theoretical assertions that self-efficacy influences psychological functioning, while also emphasizing the intricacy of mental well-being. The research provides significant insights for educators, counselors, and legislators in formulating tailored assistance for disadvantaged adolescents. It emphasizes the significance of cultivating academic confidence and mental well-being, acknowledging that supplementary social and environmental aspects must be considered to promote comprehensive student development.

**Keywords:** Academic Self-Efficacy, Mental Well-Being, Senior High School Students.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Academic self-efficacy is a crucial factor influencing students' academic achievement. It denotes an individual's confidence in their ability to successfully do academic activities, hence augmenting motivation, perseverance, and resilience when confronted with problems (Escobar & Rawafih, 2023). Mental well-being enables pupils to manage stress, recognize their capabilities, and adjust to learning contexts (Alshehri, 2021). Numerous studies indicate that adolescents from disadvantaged or low socioeconomic backgrounds frequently have diminished academic self-efficacy. Research indicates that inadequate academic self-efficacy,

prevalent among kids from underprivileged backgrounds, results in subpar academic achievement (Vadivel et al., 2023). Research indicates that a lack of privilege negatively impacts academic self-efficacy (Firdarous et al., 2020), and these pupils frequently exhibit a deficiency in confidence about academic tasks (Wilde, 2020). Likewise, Cebu (2022) discovered that students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds exhibit markedly diminished academic self-efficacy.

Moreover, students exhibiting low academic self-efficacy frequently demonstrate a deficiency in confidence, potentially resulting in subpar academic performance, less motivation, and heightened stress and anxiety (Majeed, 2022; Hitches et al., 2022). Although there is an increasing amount of literature on academic self-efficacy and mental well-being, the direct influence of academic self-efficacy on the mental well-being of students from disadvantaged backgrounds remains largely unexplored. Most current research emphasizes the correlation between bad health or environmental situations and mental well-being, while socioeconomic factors are frequently seen as secondary impacts (Vadivel et al., 2023; Firdarous et al., 2020). The precise correlation between diminished academic self-efficacy and the emotional, psychological, and social aspects of mental well-being among disadvantaged students is insufficiently investigated. This research deficiency hinders the formulation of effective support interventions aimed at enhancing academic and mental health outcomes in socioeconomically disadvantaged populations.

This study seeks to investigate the correlation between academic self-efficacy and mental well-being among underprivileged senior high school students at Burdeos National High School in the Philippines, many of whom are recipients of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)—a governmental initiative aimed at poverty alleviation that offers conditional cash transfers to low-income families to enhance education, health, and nutrition. Based on Albert Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory and Yoesoep Edhie Rachmad's Mental Well-being Theory, the study examines the impact of students' perceptions in their academic capabilities on their well-being, specifically regarding positive emotions and thoughts, relationships, and overall functioning. The study aims to (1) ascertain the level of academic self-efficacy; (2) evaluate the extent of mental well-being; (3) investigate the correlation between academic self-efficacy and mental well-being; and (4) establish whether sex and age serve as moderating factors in this relationship. The findings intend to guide treatments that enhance the mental health and academic achievement of underprivileged pupils.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Academic Self-Efficacy

Academic self-efficacy denotes a student's conviction in their capacity to excel in academic endeavors and achieve their educational objectives. This conviction profoundly affects students' approaches to academic obstacles, their learning regulation, and their perseverance in the face of adversity. Elevated Academic Self-Efficacy correlates with enhanced motivation, superior learning strategies, and increased performance, whereas diminished academic self-efficacy is connected with avoidance behavior, academic stress, and

decreased accomplishment (Lin et al., 2022; Jian, 2022). Students possessing elevated self-efficacy are more inclined to establish ambitious objectives, invest effort, and recuperate from adversities. Students advancing through increasingly challenging academic tasks, particularly in higher education, exhibit that those with robust academic self-efficacy are more adept at managing academic stress and maintaining elevated levels of engagement and performance (Meng & Zhang, 2023; Azila-Gbettor et al., 2021).

Numerous recent research have emphasized the robust correlation between academic self-efficacy and academic achievement, motivation, and psychological well-being. Saidah (2024) and Ale (2025) assert that students who possess confidence in their academic capabilities exhibit superior performance and more perseverance in learning endeavors. Furthermore, academic self-efficacy has been demonstrated to influence the association between perceived academic climate and academic performance, particularly in supportive settings (Moussa, 2023). Students exhibiting elevated academic self-efficacy are more inclined to employ profound learning strategies and effectively adjust to novel and varied educational environments (Basileo et al., 2024). Conversely, perfectionist tendencies and academic tiredness are more evident in students with low academic self-efficacy, as elevated self-efficacy has been shown to mitigate these adverse consequences (Sari et al., 2024; Galindo-Domínguez & Bezanilla, 2021).

Moreover, academic self-efficacy is crucial in mental health and emotional control. He et al. (2023) posits a positive association between academic self-efficacy and mental well-being, indicating that students who possess confidence in their academic abilities exhibit enhanced emotional functioning. Students' confidence in their academic capabilities also influences their capacity to cope with stress and sustain a sense of accomplishment and well-being (Kapil et al., 2024). Academic self-efficacy serves as a vital element of personal strength, predicting academic achievements while also enhancing resilience, motivation, and overall happiness with the educational experience (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022; Ndyareeba et al., 2024). Based on these findings, it is crucial to enhance students' academic self-efficacy through deliberate interventions and nurturing learning settings to foster both academic achievement and psychological well-being.

## **Mental Well-Being**

Mental well-being denotes a condition of emotional, psychological, and social health wherein individuals may adeptly navigate daily problems, cultivate significant relationships, and lead gratifying lives. Alshehri (2021) posits that it includes not only the lack of mental diseases but also the existence of healthy emotional functioning, self-assurance, and resilience. The World Health Organization endorses this comprehensive perspective, defining mental well-being as the capacity to fulfill one's potential, manage typical life stresses, engage in productive employment, and contribute to the community (Edwards et al., 2021; Gautam et al., 2024).

Within this framework, positive emotions and cognition, positive relationships, and positive functioning are widely acknowledged sub-dimensions that signify emotional positivity, social connectivity, and the capacity to operate effectively in daily life (Kristoffersen

et al., 2024). Elements include self-efficacy, optimism, trust, curiosity, energy, and sociability enhance mental well-being, whereas poverty, financial stress, and insufficient social support detrimentally influence it (Rippon et al., 2022). Mental well-being significantly influences academic performance and learning outcomes by improving motivation, emotional regulation, and cognitive functioning (Garces et al., 2024).

Recent studies underscore the profound relationship between socioeconomic position and mental health. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds experience heightened psychological risks, including anxiety, stress, and depression, attributable to financial constraints and insufficient resources (Wu et al., 2022). This is especially troubling for students who find it difficult to satisfy fundamental requirements such as food and housing, which directly affects their academic performance and general development (Shi, 2024). Furthermore, inadequate mental health may result from academic stressors, insufficient social support, and the stigma associated with seeking assistance (Stoll et al., 2022). Mental well-being encompasses both hedonic (pleasure, life satisfaction) and eudaimonic (purpose, self-realization) dimensions, influenced by cultural, psychological, and environmental influences (Dhanabhakya & Sarath, 2023; Goyer et al., 2021). Gautam et al. (2024) and Erwanto et al. (2024) underscore that fostering mental well-being is crucial for comprehensive development, conducive learning settings, and empowering youth to excel socially, emotionally, and academically.

### III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. **Research Design:** This study utilizes a quantitative research methodology, incorporating descriptive and correlational methods, to investigate the impact of academic self-efficacy on the mental well-being of underprivileged students. Descriptive methods summarize academic self-efficacy and mental well-being levels, while correlational analysis assesses the strength and direction of their relationship, emphasizing the sub-dimensions of mental well-being: positive emotion and cognition, relationships, and functioning.
2. **Participants/Data Sources:** The participants of this study are Senior High School students who are beneficiaries of the 4Ps program at Burdeos National High School, Philippines, for the academic year 2024–2025. The 4Ps, or Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, is a governmental project that offers conditional cash transfers to impoverished families to enhance health, nutrition, and education. Among the 373 identified beneficiaries, only those who satisfied the inclusion criteria—being a Senior High School student, a 4Ps beneficiary, and aged 16 to 18—were deemed eligible. According to their responses to the research instruments, only 288 students were considered valid and incorporated into the final data analysis, so guaranteeing the sample accurately reflects the study's target demographic.
3. **Tools and Instruments:** This research employed modified questionnaires to assess the principal factors. Academic self-efficacy was evaluated utilizing the General Academic Self-Efficacy Scale created by Van Zyl et al. (2022), a five-item self-report instrument rated on a five-point Likert scale, exhibiting a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81, signifying strong reliability. Mental well-being was assessed using the Mental Well-Being Scale created by Pimthong et al. (2022), with 10 items divided into three subscales: positive emotion and

cognition, positive relationships, and positive functioning, evaluated on a six-point Likert scale. It exhibited outstanding dependability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91.

4. **Procedures:** The researchers initially obtained an endorsement letter from the Research Coordinator and filed a request letter to their adviser and the school administrator at BNHS in Burdeos, Quezon. Prior to distribution, they elucidated the study's objective and the content of the questionnaire to the respondents. Each form contained informed consent detailing objectives, confidentiality, and voluntary involvement. Upon completion, surveys were promptly collected for tabulation, analysis, and interpretation, guaranteeing a respectful and systematic data collection process.
5. **Analysis Techniques:** The data were examined utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) in accordance with the research goals. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, will be employed to assess the degree of academic self-efficacy and the level of mental well-being. Pearson correlation analysis will be utilized to investigate the association between academic self-efficacy and mental well-being. Finally, regression analysis incorporating interaction terms will be performed to evaluate whether sex and age function as moderating variables in the link between academic self-efficacy and mental well-being.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### Summary of Descriptive Analysis

This subsection explored the level of the respondents' academic self-efficacy and the extent of mental well-being.

**Table 1**  
 Mean, Standard Deviation, Scaled Response, and Verbal Interpretation

| Variables                          | Mean | Standard Deviation                |
|------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>1. Academic Self-Efficacy</b>   |      | <i>Agree / High</i>               |
|                                    | 4.21 | 0.56                              |
| <b>2. Mental Health Well-Being</b> |      | <i>Strongly Agree / Excellent</i> |
| Positive Emotion and Thinking      | 5.27 | 0.66                              |
| Positive Relationship              | 5.37 | 0.76                              |
| Positive Functioning               | 5.16 | 0.73                              |

Table 1 indicates that the respondents exhibited a substantial degree of academic self-efficacy (M = 4.21, SD = 0.56), implying that the majority concur with assertions indicative of confidence in their academic competencies. Regarding mental well-being, students indicated commendable levels, with the highest mean recorded in Positive Relationships (M = 5.37, SD = 0.76), followed by Positive Emotion and Thinking (M = 5.27, SD = 0.66), and Positive Functioning (M = 5.16, SD = 0.73). The findings indicate that the underprivileged students at Burdeos National High School had confidence in their academic abilities and demonstrate robust mental well-being in emotional, social, and functional dimensions. This indicates a

predominantly healthy psychological and academic profile among the responders, notwithstanding their socio-economic constraints.

This study's findings correspond with prior studies indicating that underprivileged pupils can demonstrate robust academic self-efficacy. Swanson et al. (2021) emphasize that elevated self-efficacy correlates with improved academic achievement and persistence, even in students from underprivileged backgrounds. Moreover, income forecasts academic success, although other socioeconomic status indicators and self-efficacy were not conclusive—implying that confidence in one's capabilities can transcend economic obstacles (Tan et al., 2023). Palomino (2025) similarly discovered that pleasant emotions and cognitive processes enhance academic achievement and mental well-being, serving as protective factors against stress.

Moreover, according to McBride and Greeson (2021), positive emotions in the classroom augment motivation and learning behaviors. Mastul (2024) underscore the significance of supporting interactions, demonstrating that robust ties with peers and educators enhance mental well-being and academic performance. Cheang and Goh (2020) discovered that students from disadvantaged backgrounds can achieve academic excellence. Ultimately, positive functioning—students' capacity to adapt and excel in an academic environment—is significantly correlated with academic achievement and holistic development (Tripon et al., 2023).

### Summary of Correlational Analysis

This subsection explored the significant relationship between the respondents' academic self-efficacy and mental well-being.

**Table 2**  
 Relationship Between Variables

| Key Variables          | Pearson <i>r</i> | R <sup>2</sup> | Correlation       | Probability Value | Significance |
|------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Academic Self-Efficacy | 0.43             | 0.19           | Moderate positive | 0.000             | 0.05         |
| Mental Well-Being      |                  |                |                   |                   | Significant  |

*p* > 0.05 = Accept *H*<sub>0</sub> = not significant; *p* < 0.05 = reject *H*<sub>0</sub> = significant

Table 2 indicates a modest positive association (*r* = 0.43) between academic self-efficacy and mental well-being in underprivileged senior high school students, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (*p* = 0.000). The coefficient of determination (*R*<sup>2</sup> = 0.19) signifies that 19% of the variance in mental well-being is attributable to students' academic self-efficacy. This indicates that individuals with greater confidence in their academic capabilities are more inclined to enjoy enhanced mental well-being, especially regarding positive emotions and cognition, interpersonal interactions, and overall functioning.

Moreover, these data indicate that underprivileged kids with great academic self-efficacy also exhibit robust mental well-being. Their confidence in academic endeavors may positively

affect their emotional regulation, relationship-building, and overall everyday functioning. This underscores the potential benefit of improving academic self-efficacy as a means to foster general mental health, especially among socioeconomically disadvantaged adolescents.

The current study's results correspond with Basileo et al. (2024) findings, which indicated a moderate positive correlation between academic self-efficacy and mental well-being among underprivileged students, thereby reinforcing the notion that students' confidence in their academic capabilities is associated with their psychological health life (Kristoffersen et al., 2024). Saidah (2024) asserted that mental well-being underpins academic self-efficacy, indicating that students who sustain emotional and psychological stability are more inclined to persist and achieve academic success. These findings support the notion that enhancing students' academic self-efficacy can significantly benefit their entire mental well-being, particularly regarding positive thinking, supportive connections, and effective functioning (Kapil et al., 2024).

### Summary of Regression Analysis

This subsection explored the significant difference on academic self-efficacy and mental well-being in terms of sex and age.

Table 3  
 Relationship Between Key Variables in Terms of the Demographic Factors

| Model                    | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. | VI              |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|-----------------|
|                          | $\beta$                     | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |                 |
| (Constant)               | 4.394                       | 1.008      |                           | 4.358  | .000 | Significant     |
| Academic Self-Efficacy   | .213                        | .172       | .201                      | 1.242  | .215 | Significant     |
| Sex: Male & Female       | -.073                       | .064       | -.061                     | -1.149 | .251 | Not Significant |
| Age: 16, 17, 18 yrs. old | .005                        | .043       | .006                      | .112   | .911 | Not Significant |

*If  $p < 0.05$ , reject the null hypothesis, while if  $p \geq 0.05$ , accept.*

Table 3 reveals that the regression analysis demonstrates academic self-efficacy, sex, and age are not significant predictors of mental well-being among the respondents, as all p-values above 0.05. Academic self-efficacy exhibits a positive albeit weak influence ( $\beta = 0.213$ ), though its effect is not statistically significant ( $p = .215$ ). Likewise, sex and age do not significantly forecast mental well-being, indicating that these demographic characteristics do not much influence the mental well-being scores in this study. Other factors beyond self-efficacy, gender, and age may significantly influence the mental well-being of underprivileged senior high school students.

This study's findings correspond with current studies indicating that sex and age do not substantially affect academic self-efficacy or mental well-being. For instance, Livinți et al. (2021) identified no substantial correlation among self-efficacy, gender, or age in their meta-analysis. Similarly, Mbongo (2024) and Pratiwi et al. (2023) found no significant disparities in self-efficacy levels attributable to sex or age. The findings corroborate the current study's assertion that demographic variables such as gender and age may exert negligible influence on students' mental well-being and self-efficacy.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study sought to investigate the impact of academic self-efficacy on the mental well-being of underprivileged senior high school students, specifically 4Ps beneficiaries at Burdeos National High School. The results indicated that although students exhibited elevated academic self-efficacy and commendable mental well-being—particularly regarding positive relationships, emotional regulation, cognitive processes, and overall functioning—academic self-efficacy demonstrated only a moderate correlation with mental well-being and did not serve as a significant predictor when assessed in conjunction with sex and age. These findings corroborate Albert Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory, which underscores the significance of self-belief in influencing human behavior, and are consistent with Yoesoep Edhie Rachmad's Mental Well-being Theory, which emphasizes the multifaceted nature of well-being, including emotional, social, and functional dimensions. The study's drawback is its concentration on a particular cohort within a single institution, potentially impacting the generalizability of the results.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Educational institutions can gain from promoting strategies that enhance students' self-assurance in their scholarly competencies. Basic initiatives such as peer support, goal-setting exercises, or skill enhancement sessions can prove beneficial.
2. Institutions should persist in advancing initiatives that foster students' emotional, social, and functional well-being. Initiatives such as creating a secure environment for dialogue, fostering healthy relationships, and providing wellness activities can facilitate this objective.
3. Given that academic self-efficacy, gender, and age were not significant predictors of mental well-being in this study, future researchers can investigate supplementary factors such as familial history, educational environment, or community support to obtain more profound insights.
4. Enhancing the linkage among school, family, and the broader community can foster a more supportive atmosphere for pupils. Involving parents and community people in school activities can be one approach to achieve this.

5. Implementing analogous studies in alternative schools or locations may assist in corroborating the findings and examining the influence of diverse surroundings on students' academic self-efficacy and mental well-being. This can also provide valuable insights into current theories.

#### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 4 provided overall supervision of the study as the research adviser, while Authors 1, 2, and 3 were primarily responsible for writing the original draft, revising the manuscript, collecting data, and securing funding for the research. All remaining tasks—including conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data analysis, and interpretation of results—were collaboratively undertaken by both authors. Both authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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